

ODDWORLD: Jezebel's Quest

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Summary: After making a drastic escape from 'Xplosive McGee, the runaway Outlaw, Jezebel Shappow, journeys to find her mother. On her Quest, she meets new faces and new allies, haunted with the acknowledgement of 'Xplosive McGee hot on her tail...

1. Prelude

****Oddworld: Jezebel's Quest****

****Prelude****

Dear Ma,

There is something I have been meaning to tell you. I would have done it sooner, but I couldn't bring myself to tell you them. I know by now you must have forgotten about me, and I wouldn't blame you. After my disappearance, I can understand why you'd be heart-broken, even angry at me. I left without giving you a reason; I abandoned my only home without saying goodbye.

Believe me when I say I did it for good. My abandonment was conducted only to keep the lives in New York City safe. I did it to keep you safe, Ma. You know I love you. So very much.

I don't have much time, but I wish to get to the point with you.

I knew you weren't my real Ma. I knew it from the start. I was always so different, compared to everyone else. I wasn't a Clakker. I didn't have wings, or feathers. In fact, I was far darn uglier than Ugly Betty, and that's saying something, right?!

I grew up seeing you as my Ma, and I grew up as a big girl. I was much bigger than any of my class-mates, and even bigger than the male adults in town. When I look at my face and compare them to yours, I knew something wasn't right. It wasn't until I came of age that I

realised the truth. Despite this, I always saw you as my Ma, and always loved you. You took me in when no one would. I'd probably be dead if it wasn't for you.

Consider my disappearance as a sign of my gratitude for everything you had to put up with. What I did was only to keep you alive. I did it because I love you. I know you must be hurting, but it hurts me more than what words can say...

You see, I made an agreement with an Outlaw. He threatened that if I didn't join his gang he would hunt down everyone in New York City and kill them. I couldn't help but think about that poor Farmer Beeks and his daughters in the Opplé Farm, when Meagley McGraw killed them. I couldn't bear the thought of it happening to you.

You and I know who I'm talking about. That bastard 'Xplosive McGee.

So I left without any goodbyes. I had to. It was now or never, and you know McGee doesn't take shit. Everyone fears him, even me. And I'm a big girl, as you always say!

I'm sending you this letter to not only explain myself and tell you that I still love you, it's also a warning. I want you to leave town as soon as possible. Warn the others too. But please, if they do not heed your warning, leave without them. If anything, I want to make sure your safe. Run to the furthest town, please, I beg of you. Get as far away from New York City as possible! You see, I'm planning to leave the gang. The abuse I get...No, it's not what you think. Of course, the minions in McGee's gang are harmless, and mostly worship or even fear me. But it's McGee that's the problem...

I don't really wish to talk about it right now.

But, please, run away to a town far away as soon as you can. Don't worry about sending me a letter back. Let me find you! If you send a letter, McGee will track you down and kill you. He might be a big bag of shit, but he's a very clever bastard if he has to be. Has more brains than explosives, sometimes, it unsettling!

So don't worry about me. I can look after myself.

C'mon, Ma. You're a beautiful old Clakker; you have the rest of your life and singing career to pursue. Surely, you can't be seen with an adult Outlaw anymore...

The reputation Outlaws have now, it would be taboo.

Until we meet again, I won't say goodbye. But I will say what you have always taught me when I was a kid:

It's time to say goodbye, but goodbyes are too sad. I'd much rather say hello. Hello to a new adventure.

I love you, Ma.

Jezebel

2. Chapter 1: The Escape of Jezebel Shappow

****Chapter 1: ****

****The Escape of Jezebel Shappow****

"Get her, boys! Don't let her escape!"

The bulky figure grunted under her breath, running down to the base of the yellow-green hill, dodging through the stabbing force-bolts of the bullets that rained down from above. It was only by good fortune that she had escaped the massacre of endless bullets and fuming outlaw voices.

The figure retreated a little further, to where an enormous rock stood, and took shelter behind it. She slammed her back against it, taking a quick rest as dirty sweat ran down from her crimson headband, falling freely from the frantic turns of her head, taking in all of the sources of noise around her. She stood there, hearing the booming voice of 'Xplosive McGee in the distance, his voice full of cold menace, a voice that she had grown to fear and hate.

He was pissed.

She paused for a time, raising her massive clawed hand, readying. A few moments later, one of the minions, a Shooter, huddled around the rock, unaware of her presence. It wasn't until he noticed a shadow looming over him, and only had time to scream in fear when the greasy hand, as large as his entire skull, clutched around his face cruelly, suffocating the tiny outlaw against her palm and lifted him easily off the ground. Instantly, she swung the outlaw against the rock with a force that effortlessly shattered bones, demolishing his tiny body and killing him. The Outlaw Shooter hung limp from her grasp, and she darted from her shelter, seeing a small collection of Outlaws running down the hill her way. She threw the corpse of their comrade at them aggressively, stalling them and distracting them. She took this chance to run; her heavy structure ran with great, loping strides across the scarred clearing towards where the mine-carts were kept.

The scorching sun burned the lands around her, her thick, leathery trench-coat flapping as her boots thudded brutally against the dead grasslands. She heard McGee's voice, his antagonism evident in his roars. He had raged an order she did not catch, but she didn't need to, for she already knew what was going to happen.

She heard an explosion of impact in the distance, making her stop and look up against the glaring sunlight. There was a breathless pause, as she realised that the sound belonged to the infamous mortar cannons McGee's Mortar Outlaws were so fond of. She saw the large bomb reaching to the skies, before arching down towards her, falling faster and faster...

...She ran as fast as her tall, large body could carry her, making her way into the mine-shaft that was built through the mountains, propped up against wooden beams that had been there since the beginning of time. She leapt to the floor, bracing herself as the backlash of the explosion hit. And then the entrance of the mine imploded, folding in on itself with a thick boom and reducing it to a heap of crushed metal, crumpling to a wrecked mess of rocks and

wood.

The runaway outlaw fell onto her front, knocking the wind out of her lungs and laid there for a moment, unmoved.

Then, slowly, she propped herself up from the ground, catching her breath. Feeling light-headed, she furiously spat the blood that was already pooling in her mouth from the forceful shock her jaw took, splattering the gunk-like, red substance onto the stone.

She glared over her shoulder, brushing the thick ropes of hair from her face.

"Ahh, that'll hold them stupid bastards," She murmured, her voice low with arrogance. But she knew that it'll only be a matter of time before they blow a new entrance. She'll have to make use of this time.

She got onto her mud-stained boots, her seven-foot hefty structure towering and hurried down the dim mine-shaft, dust-streaked and agitated. It didn't even occur to her that this mine-shaft could possibly be a dead-end; nor did she question what would happen if she was cornered by McGee. She simply acted, running further down the caverns and hoped to find an exit soon, feeling claustrophobic as the mine-shaft began to shrink in height, causing her to hunch down and scraping the top of her weapon. The rocket-launcher that she cherished was strapped onto her back. It was the only easy way of travel with it. Due to its size and weight, it was almost impossible to run as quickly if she was carrying it in her arms. Besides, she didn't wish to linger around these mines any longer. It had been her home for the past five years, and was forced to accept it.

Not anymore. She was determined to get her life back.

At last, she had found the exit to the mine-shaft, and just as she had hoped, she saw the mine-carts resting in the lay-by, her only means of escape. This was her only way out, to leave the mountains from McGee for _good_!

Her hardened gaze fell onto the rails at her feet; the twin-set of metal ran from the mine-shaft she stood all the way to the entrance of an unused tunnel between the mountain-tops. She could use it to escape. She barely noticed the screams and yelling from Xplosive McGee, her whole attention fixed onto the mine-cart, a great, heavy thing of black iron. Already she was pushing it, using her brute strength to eventually edge it towards the broken metal gates. It was reluctant at first, but then after a few seconds it lurched into a slow roll. She grabbed the side and pulled herself in, trying hard to rest her huge form into the cart, just about able to sit in it. She glared back as the cart began to pick up speed, peering over the metal lip, and saw Xplosive McGee and his Outlaw Minions pouring through the entrance of the mine-shaft. The Minions were running in pursuit, gathering the spare mine-cart and showering her with blasts from their guns; but they were falling behind rapidly.

She glared hotly at McGee, and as the mine-cart drifted away from him, she lifted her hand up, and gave McGee the middle-finger. That amused her, and of course, angered the large Outlaw leader.

"Aww, shit! Get Jezebel!"

She frowned to see the Outlaws preparing the mine-cart, and even worse, Xplosive McGee took the liberty in snatching it and demanded a push from his Minions.

Instantly regretting her taunt, Jezebel threw her weight against the cart, forcing it to accelerate quicker. Sparks sprayed from the wheels as she hit the peak, and was sent hurling down the rails into the mine tunnel. Jezebel was hunched over the front of the cart, her braid flapping about her and her clothes whipping around her arms and legs, the ends of her tattered trench-coat practically lifted in the air, following behind her.

She glanced over her shoulder, and mute-horror grew in her small crimson eyes to see the McGee's mine-cart following her closely, not only keeping pace with her mine-cart but actually gaining on it.

"_Shit!_" Jezebel cried, as she reached a long, slow curve to the left and was nearly thrown to the side of the cart. Keeping on hand on the metal lip for support, Jezebel grabbed for her custom-made rocket-launcher from the straps over her shoulders, and raised it, aiming at McGee's cart. But the vigorous shakes and turns made it difficult for her to aim accurately.

She fired once, her rocket aimlessly soaring in the air, and narrowly missed the bottom of McGee's mine-cart. He howled with laughter at the failed attempt.

"Yer think dat's gonna work, do you, Jessie?!" He mocked as a fierce grin painted on his ugly face, taking his own weapon of choice from his mine-cart and aimed it at her. Her pupils dinted to see the barrels of his six-shooting "body-rocking" grenade launcher. She snarled viciously. She had many unpleasant confrontations with this weapon, and they all ended up with her in a pool of her own blood. Not this time, though...

She threw herself forward as the mine-cart tore around the bend at a speed that seemed certain to send her tumbling into the wall.

Jezebel's heart thudded in her chest and throat, ducking in her mine-cart as she braced for the impact of McGee's grenade launcher. The cart slammed out of the curve and on to the long straight that ran across the huge rock bridge that spanned over the destroyed lands McGee's Outlaws recklessly ruined for countless years. Jezebel's weight provided down-force, preventing the cart from derailing.

She had lost track of where she was, but at the frightening speed her cart ran, she heard the unmistakable sound of McGee's Grenade launcher firing, and she felt the callous quake beneath her cart.

Her heart seized when she felt the entire metal cart topple over, and the world flipped. She only managed to see the silhouette of McGee's fat body looking down at her against the hot orb of the sun, preventing her from seeing anything else.

If McGee had said something at that point, she was unable to catch it.

Her blurred vision suddenly enveloped into a freezing-cold watery world, and then she was gone.

3. Chapter 2: Homecoming

****Chapter 2:****

****Homecoming****

All was silent on the edge of New York City. A scramble of dust glided across the dirt path, unable to disturb the lone figure that lay on the floor, drenched by the lake that was kind enough to spare her, and brought her ashore. Her rocket-launcher, the BlackBox, had shattered during the violent outbursts of McGee's grenade launcher. Its remains lay beside the body of Jezebel.

For a time, nothing moved.

Once Jezebel's mind roused from its unconscious state, she groaned against the scorching Oddworld sun, rolling onto her back. Her mind was numbly throbbing, trying to get its bearings in where Jezebel had been washed up on.

She could not believe her narrow escape. For a split-second, she thought she had lost everything, including her life. But she was alive and breathing, away from the mad chaos of McGee's Lair. She was safe...for now. The nature around her seemed to have comforted her.

Her head lolled to one side, and further ahead, she saw the tops of familiar buildings. Her eyes widened to have realised she was near New York City...her home. She felt her massive form trembling at the sight of it before forcing her aching body to move, preparing herself to visit the town.

She had hoped that her Clakker-Mother was no longer there, that she took heed in Jezebel's warning and left the town. Though she wouldn't be disappointed if she was still there...

Gradually, she readjusted her broken Black-Box on her back, pulling the straps over her shoulders and gazed around the ground for any more pieces. She was left disappointed. She must have lost the rest of it in the river. She didn't worry too much though; the thing needed a decent upgrade anyway. As her body slowly gained strength, she leisurely limped her way towards the outskirts of New York City. She knew she would have to stealthily sneak in. Last thing she needed was drama from the Clakkerz, whether they knew her or not. They see an Outlaw, they will instantly panic.

The Outlaws now have control over the fragile lives of the Clakkerz.

Jezebel could not help but wished she had that same power too...

Luckily for her, very little Clakkerz roamed the dusty streets of New York City. Not as many as Jezebel recalled back in her childhood. She remained in the shadows, hiding behind the wooden buildings, trying

hard not to let anyone or anything see her. All of her time sneaking out of McGee's Lair certainly paid off. The Clakkerz were lazy and self-centred, not really aware of their surroundings, so in comparison to McGee's boys, this was simple for Jezebel, even with her built.

She pulled herself over the wooden walls, heaving herself onto the balconies that were hidden at the back of the Clakker houses, away from unwanted gazes in the streets. The balconies faced the mountain walls that enclosed around the town.

Jezebel stood there for a time, her eyes searching for a particular backyard, one she knew at the back of her hand.

She couldn't help but feel sorrow filling once she saw the small backyard that was abandoned; its flowers that once bloomed in vivid colours were now dried and blackened in the sun's heat. Even with the cracked pots, and the dead flowers, she knew who once owned that garden.

On silent footsteps, she walked along the balcony of the neighbouring houses, until she was at her targeted house.

She leapt onto the ground in the middle of the forgotten backyard, clouds of sawdust-like smog danced around her boots. Mutely, she stood up and faced the back-door, and was unable to stop her bottom lip from quivering when she knew that she was in the backyard of her old home.

It was a garden she used to play in all the time. Her mother-Clakker's backyard. The place looked so tiny from where she remembered it. She had found her old home, and like a bitter memory, Jezebel's shoulders tightened, but no more.

The Outlaw approached the back-door, grabbed the door handle and twisted it.

It was locked.

Jezebel closed her eyes for a moment, and then gripping onto the door-handle tightly, she shoulder-barged into it firmly. Easily, the back-door gave way and she was within the cool house, almost caught off-guard by the low-ceilings of the building.

When she had reached inside her old home, away from the dusty outskirts of New York City, silence pressed painfully against her eardrums. She longed for the comforting murmur of her mother's voice. The emptiness and isolation of the aged house wore on her nerves intensely, but she knew she couldn't pass the opportunity of seeing if her mother was still in town. She had no other choice but the break in from the tiny, bare backyard. She couldn't afford to risk the inquiring eyes of neighbours if she had entered through the front-door. One of them might notice that she was an Outlaw, and would cause a serious uproar, believing that she was breaking into a house for Moolah. Some may even noticed the darkened blood-stains on her pants and trench-coat. Even if someone did recognise Jezebel, they wouldn't care. They'd look for any sort of excuse to fire and attack foreigners.

It had been five years since she had set foot in this town. She was a

Stranger to them all.

Despite the relief that flooded into Jezebel to see no one was around, that her mother did take her word for it, she couldn't help but feel disappointment.

She gazed around at her childhood home wordlessly, left to rot and abandoned for a few weeks, maybe more...

The very sight of the home had left Jezebel feeling unsettled. She tucked her hand into the interior pocket of her trench-coat, and pulled out a small box containing fat cigars, the really expensive cigars McGee always had. She felt livid enough to steal them away from the bastard. She propped one in her mouth, and lit it with the lighter she also stole from McGee. She didn't feel remorse for her acts, McGee deserved it, though she wretchedly apologised to the motherless house for her smoking habits. McGee found it amusing forcing her to start smoking once he stole her away from her home.

Inhaling onto her cigar eagerly, Jezebel's trench-coat brushed the wooden floor as she walked silently through the building. It swung open with every step, showing the gleam of its black silken lining as a wispy trail of smoke followed her, her heavy footsteps were her only source of ease.

Jezebel crept up the creaking wooden stairs as noiselessly and as gently as possible, unsure if the old stairway could take her adult-weight. She grabbed hold of the banister and made her way to the hallway upstairs. Once she found herself at the landing, she turned to the first room on her left.

She peeked through the small door of her mother's bedroom, and found it unoccupied. Her wardrobe was empty, her shoes were gone, all drawers had been pulled open, emptied and had been left untouched since. Her bed was made, and had not been slept in for countless days. For a room she had always recalled to be dazzling, stunning and chirpy with her mother's beaming smiles and soft laughter, she was taken back to see it in gloomy darkness, deserted and forgotten.

It was so lifeless now.

Jezebel sighed deeply, her broad shoulders drooping at the heartbreaking sight as she leaned against the small entrance, her towering height now forcing her to bow her head just to fit in the doorways.

Cigar smoke delicately drifted around Jezebel, her only reminder that she was not dreaming. She could feel the addicting yet fiery sensation of her cigar writhing in her throat, filling the dead space with smoke.

She turned away and inspected her bedroom. Devastatingly, she recalled every single detail she had left her room in, and it was evident that her mother had not touched, moved or cleaned her bedroom since. She hasn't even entered inside, for the door-handle almost crumbled into Jezebel's very hand.

Carefully not to move anything in her bedroom, Jezebel's massive spiked-boots tapped deeply against the creaking floorboards, until

she reached to the other-side of her bedroom, looming dauntingly over her bed, which was now half of her actual size. She wasn't sure what moved her to reach for it. It was just like her mother's bed, a small round nest filled with straw, cloth, blankets and a small array of round pillows that had taken on a cooper colour with age. Snuggled in the centre of all the pillows was a small doll, dirtied and frail with age. It took Jezebel a moment to realise that this very doll was a beautiful white Steef maiden. She wore the most striking crimson gown, trimmed with gold, with matching red sleeves that draped way past her hands, and almost touched her tiny hooves. Bright sapphire hair framed the doll's pretty face; ties of scarlet ribbon around the hair that hung beside her small face, golden eyes peered through the blue locks.

Nara.

Lifting its fragile form from the bed, she laid it on her palm, her large hand dwarfing the tiny doll. Only a blush of the original colours remained, but she knew that they had once been brave reds and shocking blues. She had loved to play with her Steef Maiden doll every day, and would take her everywhere. Until she came of age where she was far too old for dolls, but still loved it. She was unsure how or where her mother got it from, but she cherished it like an old friend, always wishing to see a stunning Steef maiden herself one day. Of course, rumours say that they were all dead...

Jezebel was a little surprised that the doll still had the power to please her. It seemed like fragile ghosts of a long-dead joy.

She replaced it carefully onto the unscathed sea of pillows mutely.

She turned to the bedside table, and felt her blood running cold to see a small framed photo.

Jezebel leaned down to the miniature table, grabbed the photo-frame gently, scarcely breathing for fear the brittle frame would tumble into dust.

In the darkness, Jezebel heavily sat onto the undisturbed bed, her meaty hands holding firmly onto a single frame and just stared at it. Before her face the soft smoke from her lit cigar clouded around her daintily, emitting a surreal sensation to what Jezebel was seeing.

Silently, Jezebel's narrow eyes focused on the faded painted image before her, yellowed with age.

The painted image itself was amateurish, but it showed clearly enough features of a large, beaming Clakker, a large straw hat sat on top of her head ornate with a collection of small flowers from her garden. Clutching onto her was the small figure of Jezebel, when she was around the tender age of six, hugging onto her mother's fleshy neck.

Suddenly, like a strong flavour bursting against the top of her mouth, Jezebel remembered the warmth of her mother's love, and tears stung the back of her eyes. Always in her childhood there had been the smell of her mother's cornbread baking in the kitchen, the warmth of the sun that blessed their tiny garden filled with countless

flowers in which her mother took care of very well. She could hear in her mind the background clatter of the Clakkerz that walked around New York City, padded feet tapping against the baked cobblestone in the town. She remembered herself as a little girl, peering over the fence of their backyard and gazed up at the outlandish skies, and had imagined what life was like outside the town. As the years went by, she grew more fascinated with Oddworld.

But after the arrival of Xplosives McGee and his gang, the lesson she had learned came back to her powerfully - the world was dangerous. Love had made her trust Oddworld, but it had bitterly betrayed her.

Now she had realised how much of a dark world she lived in...

Then that motherly warmth was no longer there, and like a forgotten chant, every shred of glee had been drained from Jezebel. Right down to their backyard, in which had been left to rot in the sun, no sight of plantation, all flowers had been dried up, vegetables shrivelled in the heat, and the potted plants had been forsaken, the soil hardening into what Jezebel was familiar with as the earth she walked on.

Despite the years that had passed, Jezebel was still unable to remove the memory of her encounter with the large, intimidating Outlaw...

...Flint "Explosive" McGee was the most feared Outlaw in town, and Jezebel had made the grave mistake of being out of her home when he arrived in town. Many had believed that McGee was raised by Wolvarks, and that is how he became powerful as he is today, being able to steal with ease.

Explosions and gunfire assaulted the air, frightening the Clakkerz and forcing them to retreat back to their homes. But McGee had caught his eye on Jezebel just as she attempted to hide, following the Clakkerz' leads. The foul-tempered Outlaw had literally cornered the female Outlaw and had interrogated her about the Black-Market in New York City. Jezebel was old enough to know what kind of a person McGee was, and refused to talk. Of course, the male outlaw knew what she was, and had threatened to destroy all of the residents and the town itself if she didn't join his gang. Unable to say goodbye to her mother, she agreed. Her heart was pounding when McGee grabbed her wrist cruelly and had ordered his minions to find the Black-Market and to receive his weapons. Jezebel had struggled against McGee, attempting to fight him off, but she felt the knuckles of McGee's fist ploughing against her face. She gasped in pain, and the darkness swarmed with red, and the blackness closed over her consciousness.

When she opened her eyes, she saw stars like holes of brightness in the sky and knew that she was no longer home. The dry air caught in the baked rocks and earth became brittle underneath her. Rolling over, she saw the wide arch of McGee's hideout, overcrowded with mortar minions and explosive barrels. She then realised she had been taken away from home, up high in the canyons where McGee had recently began to illegally mine for artifacts. Slowly, she raised herself a little and crawled on her hands and knees.

"Where ja' think yer goin'?" McGee's gravelly laugh ran out in the

darkness, chilling Jezebel. "Yer part of my team, and yer do what I say, got it!"

She looked up from the tattered curtain of her brunette hair, and noticed with horror that was surrounded by the minions that had accompanied McGee, with the menacing Outlaw standing before her, his arms folded over his huge belly...

...The memory froze at that sight, taunting at her.

A chill rode up the back of Jezebel's neck.

She hastily removed the old photo from the frame and tucked it carefully into the inside pocket of her trench-coat, but the memories it had wakened were not so easily put away. She heaved herself off the small bed, and turned back to her Steef Maiden doll, Nara.

She took her too, and slipped her into the same pocket, her tiny size perfect to tuck her inside, flawlessly safe against Jezebel's body.

The Outlaw gazed out the window and saw the orange twilight of the sunset gathering under the rocky-walls and trees. She placed both of her large hands onto the window and pressed her forehead against the glass, staring across the small yards hidden against the red-rock of the mountain longingly.

She knew she couldn't stay here forever. McGee would eagerly raid this town in search for her; he was very much like that. The deaths he would cause though...Jezebel knew that would be her fault, but she felt no sorrow for the city of New York. With the exception of her foster-mother, the Clakkerz in the town treated her and her mother with such disrespect and hatred. Her Clakker-Mother would be labelled a moron for taking in such an ugly creature, while Jezebel was mocked for her repulsive appearance, and bullied for her parentless life. These fleshy creatures that roamed the street of New York City had always given Jezebel and her mother-Clakker waves of never-ending insults, making them almost suffer. Their only sanctuary was this very home, which Jezebel can now barely stand up in.

Darkness fell over Jezebel's eyes for a time, her fists clenching against the glass of the window slowly, until her knuckles bleached.

This whole damn town can suffer...

Jezebel didn't felt any guilt for the Clakkerz' impending doom of McGee's rage. This town might have been her home for the last several years, but it was no easy childhood. Back when she was a child, Outlaws were mocked at, laughed, belittled. But now that the Outlaws have become bigger and stronger, congregated into packs, and have become fearful for their dangerous and illegal acts, the Clakkerz had been made to feel small, the same kind of treatment Jezebel suffered due to their close-minded and snobby attitudes.

Eventually, she moved away from the window and made her way out of the bedroom slowly, as if trying hard not to wake a sleeping child. Her mother-Clakker, Rose, had left her room like this, and Jezebel did not wish to ruin her wish. She only took what was hers, and left the room at peace. Closing the door behind her softly, Jezebel

pondered.

She had no idea where Rose had gone. Buzzarton was the nearest town Jezebel knew of, down south from New York City. But then there was Gizzard Gulch, south-west from Dead Hen's Pass...

Jezebel sighed heavily. Rose could have gotten anywhere, and with no signal or clue to tell her where Rose might have gone, she was lost. She didn't wish to risk arranging a rendezvous with her. McGee might have caught the letter in his tracks, and would have easily killed her.

Unless...

Like a pin pricking at her mind, Jezebel realised something.

Maybe Rose did leave a clue, Jezebel just missed it.

Rose wasn't stupid. She knew Jezebel would have returned home, just to make sure she was safe and out. For an Outlaw, Jezebel was rather protective of others she cared for.

Smirking in the shadows of the empty house, Jezebel chuckled softly.

"Ma...yer clever hen, you..."

Turning on the heels of her boots, Jezebel made her way down the narrow staircase, her mind set to its target. Being careful not to head-butt the small doorframes, Jezebel entered the petite kitchen, a tiny room with a window that looked out over the small backyard. A round wooden table stood in the centre of the room, surrounded by stools.

Beneath the table was a thin rug made by the Ancient Native Grubbs, according to the seller.

Clakker possibly stole it, Jezebel numbly thought.

Jezebel had always adored gazing at the patterns of the rug, constantly imagining the stories that the pretty antique art were trying to express. She would gaze at them fondly, pretending to be some kind of archaeologist, trying to decode what the patterns were saying. Of course, she never really understood any of it. But she knew one thing about it.

Grabbing the edge of the table, Jezebel dragged it off the rug, exposing it to her. Once the table and stools were out of the way, Jezebel got onto her knees before it and lifted the rug up, revealing a small trap-door. The trap-door had a padlock the size of Jezebel's palm, a thick and cold heavy piece of metal. Rose would have the key for it, no doubt.

Jezebel smirked with joy at it. It was where her Mother-Clakker would hide valuable things inside, using it as a small safe. She had once told Jezebel that if anything were to happen with her, she should always look in the safe.

Such as a time like this.

Jezebel didn't need the key, and she assumed Rose knew that too. Others would have dismissed it, or search for a key that wasn't there in the first place, but Rose knew of Jezebels' strength very well.

Getting a firm grip onto the padlock, her strong fingers wrapping around it tightly, Jezebel yanked the padlock viciously from the trap-door, emitting an ear-splitting _crack!_ as the hinges practically flew off. She placed the shattered door onto the ground softly, staring down into the little alcove. There was just a small bag. She fished it out from the alcove and peered inside of it. There was a sealed letter, a rolled-up sheet of paper, a hunting knife, and a tiny box.

Jezebel sat on the floor, cross-legged, and took the letter first, examining it. There was no name. Curiously, she opened it, hoping this was addressed to her. Once she took the letter and opened it, her body filled with relief to see her mother-Clakker's handwriting on the paper, with her name.

_My dearest Jessie, _

_I knew you'd be strong enough to break this safe. I had to throw the key away to make sure no one would get it. _

Thank you for your letter. I have truly thought I lost you forever. I had packed everything and will be leaving the very same night. I wanted to make sure you were safe and prepared, so I have made a small pack for you. I do not wish for anyone to find us. New York City had gone down the drain. Once we reunite, I hope we may live at peace finally.

I will tell you where I will be, but it will be a clue. Only you and I know the answer:

It is where we went on holiday on your 15th birthday.

I will meet you there. Please, my love, be safe.

I love you.

Your mother~

Jezebel felt her throat close up bitterly to see the letter, reading it in her mother-hen's voice. She was relieved that Rose was just as prepared as she was, and was thankful she had left her some kind of clue.

Where they went for their holiday on her 15th birthday...that was going several years back...

Jezebel looked up to the low ceiling; her blood-red eyes squinted in the darkness as she tried to find her childhood memories at the back of her mind. She tried remembering scenes and objects from that holiday.

This town had a lot of grassland, compared to the dry and sandy towns of _Buzzarton_ and _Gizzard Gulch_, a rather large complex with massive houses, houses bigger than the one in New York City.

Jezebel frowned, finding no answer.

Cupping her chin in the palm of her hand, the big outlaw closed her eyes, revisiting the broken shards of memories she could recall.

The place had a lot more Clakkerz than New York City...always beautiful at night with its red neon signs and lanterns that dotted randomly around the town. The town itself was sitting on a sloping hill, unusual...

It was the very first time Jezebel had seen that yellow, school-bus...

Losing faith now, Jezebel tucked the letter into the bag, replaced the rug over the broken trap-door and shifted the table and stools around it, trying to repair the unharmed scene, hiding her presence.

As she slowly made her way to the backdoor, she took out the rolled-up sheet of paper, and opened it before her, revealing a large map, browned with age, of Mongo River.

For a long time, Jezebel stared at the map, looking into the printed words of the towns and locations that surrounded the massive body of Mongo River through the Eastern Mongo Plains. Her eyes scanned the landmarks.

_Beak's Peak...New York City...Water Facility...Native Temple...Dusky Hollow-__

Then her hands fell slack at her sides, and the map dropped from numb fingers to fluttering softly on the wooden floor. Her cigar hung from her stunned jaw.

Dusky Hollow! That was the name! It _had_ to be. All she had to do was go up-north from New York City...so long she followed up Mongo River; she should be able to get there. But with no experience of the outside world, only secluded in the mountain-walls of New York City and McGee's Lair high in the mountains, Jezebel had no idea what to expect. It was a challenge she was willing to risk!

Thank Odd for that map! It had reminded her of the town's name.

Composing herself, she snatched the map from the ground and tucked it into the small bag. She pulled out the hunting knife, one that was far too big for a Clakker to hold. Perhaps Rose got this from this Black Market this town was infamous for. It was a perfect size for Jezebel, with a clip that allowed her to hoist it onto her belt. She attached it onto her belt eagerly; glad to have some kind of working weapon. She then caught her eye on the small box.

She took it out, and delicately opened the little lid, revealing a necklace Jezebel had almost forgotten. She had no idea what it meant, but it had some kind of golden 'W' over a purple 'X' against the ruby-red stone. It was the necklace Rose wore. Why was she giving it to Jezebel?

Perhaps it was proof that this small bag was truly from her mother-Clakker. Jezebel didn't wish to linger on it, and frantically

hung the golden chain around her neck, tucking it underneath her black turtleneck shirt.

I'll take care of this, ma, Jezebel thought. She then eyed up the bag.

The bag was small enough to be tucked into the pockets of Jezebel's trench-coat, fitting comfortably.

Perhaps it was best that she made a move now. McGee would surely show up soon.

She took a couple of steps forward, and turned to the mirror that was propped up in the corner and gazed at the Outlaw who stood there. She was a towering female creature, built and threatening, with daunting blood-red eyes and hair a deep brunette. It had been pulled into strict braids, a thicker braid that fell down her back, and matching smaller braids that framed her face. Beneath the dirt, she had reptilian-like flesh, three freshly-made scars across her nose. A dirty red bandana was firmly tied around her forehead, clashing against her dark clothing, partly torn and worn down from the excessive heat and battles Jezebel had recently endured in.

She cocked a brow at her reflection. She certainly wasn't cute when she was a child, and her age showed her no kindness either...

It was then that she noticed voices from the other side of the front door.

"Hey, did yer hear somethin'?"

"I think there's an intruder breakin' in!"

Jezebel's heart leapt to her throat.

* * *

><p>[Author's Note: The white Steef Maiden, Nara, was actually based by an OC that a very dear friend of mine had. I do not own her design or character.]</p>

End
file.